1522
misc.

The World's Debt to Missionaries.

(ABRIDGED.)

MRS. JENNIE B. HANNUM.

(Read at Annual Meeting of the Illinois Branch at Moline, April, 1892.)

To attempt anything like a complete summary of what the world owes to missionaries would be a task beyond our power and space. We can only take the merest glance at some phases of the work, for it is many-sided.

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE FOR US.

We have personal reasons for gratitude to missionaries, for we owe it to them that we are not living in hollow trees, painting our faces blue, and praying to the fire and sun, as did our ancestors, if we are English; following the lead of Odin and Wodin, the gods of war and thunder, if we came of Scandinavian stock; worshipping invisible spirits in groves, if Germany was our fatherland. Patient, faithful men and women came from far and brought Christian civili-

zation to those nations, and we are ungrateful indeed if we do not pass it on to others.

Though some missionary work has been done for centuries past, yet modern Protestant missions are just completing their first hundred years. Only two of the many societies now at work date back of the year 1800, "The London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" and the Moravian Missions being longer at work. The work is increasing in a marvellous manner, as the past fifty years have accomplished more than ten times that of the previous fifty. But of moral enterprises the most valuable results are invisible and impalpable; we can only note some of the outward effects and leave to time and eternity to unfold the rest.

THE PRESENT MISSIONARY FORCE.

Let us look first at the size of this agency for the Christianizing of the world. There are now, at the beginning of 1892, one hundred and seventy societies directed by men, and one hundred and ten managed by women. At work under these societies there are 7,700 missionaries, male and female. These are aided by a force of 36,000 native preachers and teachers, making a total of 43,700. Surely this is an army of no mean size, and stationed as it is in nearly every non-Christian country of the world, something great must be accomplished by it.

Who are these men and women who have gone to

the front in this warfare? Religious enthusiasts? People with an idea they want to promulgate? Restless mortals who wish to disturb the peace and quiet in which these distant peoples have been living by adding theological discord and religious unrest.

As far from this as possible. Most of them are men and women of the best mental and spiritual culture. The kinds of work to be done by them call for varied abilities and much demands a high order of talent.

LINGUISTIC WORK.

Take the linguistic work accomplished. The Bible has been translated by them into 269 languages. In 189 of these Roman characters have been used, for we must remember that a great many of these peoples had no written language until the missionaries framed one for them. Think of the immense amount of labor this work must have involved! In many cases the language has proved pitifully meager, having no words to express home, love, or anything good or sacred. The translators must supply these words from their own language, and as the great majority of them are English-speaking, they have been the great factors in spreading our language, which is fast becoming the dominant language of the world. Years must be spent in acquiring the language and translating some books into it, and years again in teaching it to the natives and their children.

MANUAL TRAINING.

A great deal must be done besides this. It is much the same as rearing a child from infancy in each individual case, as with only a few exceptions the natives of the countries to which the missionaries have gone must be taught everything, from the use of a needle to clothe themselves, the use of saw, plane and hammer to build their houses, up to the highest arts of civilization.

Manual training is now given in most of the mission stations where there is need for it, so our missionaries must be fitted to instruct in such things. Recently a good many mechanics have accompanied the teachers, but in many cases one has taught all.

MEDICAL MISSIONS.

A great work is being done by medical missionaries, fifty of whom are supported by the women of this country. The arts of healing practiced by the heathen, even the most enlightened of them, were found to be most barbarous, and it was soon found that medical skill won the way to their hearts sooner than anything else. Lady physicians find their way into the homes of India, China and Japan when no one else can. All medical service is accompanied by instruction in morals and religion.

EXPLORATION.

Before going further in the line of work for the heathen, let me mention other incidental benefits.

We all know of the great service rendered the world by Livingstone as explorer and discoverer. Much of the same kind of service has been rendered by other missionaries since. Indeed, Europe had not known that Africa was so well worth dividing and apportioning among its various countries, had not these faithful workers brought its wealth to light while hunting for the dark sons and daughters of the race to give them light and life.

MATERIAL WEALTH.

Rich mines and other material wealth have been discovered and are being worked under the direction of men who along with their theological training took also instruction in mining and engineering.

Commerce has followed close in the wake of the missionaries. The man who looks ruefully after the departing dollar he gave to missions as gone to be seen no more, is mistaken. Let me quote from Gen. Armstrong: "America, through the American Board, expended in fifty years a million and a quarter dollars to evangelize Hawaii, and during that time has received about $4,000,000 a year in trade. England's missions are said to bring back about £10 sterling for every pound given to convert the heathen."

There are reflex influences of mission work that might be mentioned and dwelt upon had we time. The awakening and developing of sentiments of pity and sympathy all over the world, as the knowledge

of the condition of millions of our fellow men came to them, has been a great uplift. A belief in the brotherhood of man has spread over the world. Another and minor benefit has been the furnishing of a new avenue of thought and work to thousands; especially has it been helpful to women. A feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction with a narrow sphere has come to a host of other women beside Mrs. Livermore and Susan B. Anthony, and mission work and temperance work has been the healthful outcome of it.

WHAT MISSIONARIES HAVE DONE FOR OTHER LANDS.

Early in the century merchant vessels began to stop at the Sandwich, or Hawaiian Islands. In 1809 a sea captain brought a lad named Henry Obookiah from there to New Haven, Conn. He lingered around the college thirsting for instruction. From him and five others brought later, Henry Bingham and Asa Thurston gathered information that awakened a desire to go to those islands and give them the light the Gospel brings.

March 31, 1820, a company of missionaries and their wives reached Kalui Bay and awaited the close of a fourteen days' conference between the king and chiefs; the chiefs contending that they had come as enemies, but the king said, "When men come to kill they do not bring their wives along."

On landing they found that a revolution had taken

place, and that the people had lost faith in their idols and that a system of "tabu" that had long held them in bondage was broken.

The king and chiefs with their families, were the first pupils, the king's mother the first convert. "In 1863, 50,000 had been received into the communion of the churches. The islands were christianized and educated, the Bible was found in every home; churches and schools were provided for all the inhabitants. Two female seminaries, a normal school and a theological institute furnished the higher education to legislators, preachers and teachers. A greater proportion of the population could read and write than in New England."

The history of a great many of the fields is of thrilling interest, but only a few can be mentioned.

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

The New Hebrides islands in the South Pacific, were first made known to the world by Captain Cook. The people were the most degraded of human beings. A missionary from Novia Scotia went there in 1848. He labored on the island of Aneityum. A tablet in one of the churches there records this of him, "When he came here in 1848 there were no Christians, when he died in 1872 there were no heathen."

NEW GUINEA.

Look next at New Guinea. You remember the pictures of these people in the geographies we studied when children—unclad savages with heads like bushel baskets in size, with war clubs in their hands. New Guinea is the largest and one of the most beautiful islands in the world.

From an address before the British and Foreign Bible Society by Mr. Lawes, we learn something of the work there. Mr. Lawes returned to London after thirty years of labor, eleven on the savage islands and seventeen in New Guinea. He had left the work on the first islands with his brother. We can judge something of its progress by the fact that the 5,000 inhabitants had contributed £1500 sterling to the Bible Society in the last year. Of New Guinea as it was seventeen years ago he says, "Darkness, gross darkness, covered the land; beneath the feathery frondage of the palm, cannibalism and every other abomination flourished."

At the first services he attended, the savages were present in all the glory of feathers and paint. They knew nothing of writing and printing; had never seen a book. They were teachable, and before years had gone by there was great demand for English newspapers, yet not for reading, but to clothe themselves with the "*London Times*" being most in demand, because it was thickest and strongest! Mr. Lawes was greatly aided in his work by helpers

from the savage and other islands who could understand in some measure the language.

Many languages are spoken in New Guinea. They selected the one most widely used, and patiently, along with the work of teaching the arts of civilization, he studied its structure, reduced it to writing, taught them to read and write, and after seventeen years of labor he took the long journey of 14,000 miles to London bearing the precious manuscripts containing the translated Bible for publication. Speaking of his work he says, "Of course some nouns have to be introduced in translating for a people who have no corn or wine, no cattle or sheep, no silk or fine linen, no minerals or money, but these are very soon understood and assimilated." The results there have been as marvelous as in Hawaii.

MADAGASCAR.

We cross over to Madagascar. Our acquaintance with this dates back to 1820, when a representative of the British crown went there to establish some treaty relations for the purposes of trade. The king of the Hovas, the ruling tribe, asked this Englishman how he could make his people more like the other nations. He replied, "If you wish to catch up with the rest of the world, you must have schools and teachers, churches and preachers." The king promised protection if these should be sent. The London Missionary Society sent a number of missionaries, teachers, and artisans. The people were

taught carpentry, weaving, tanning and blacksmith work. The language was acquired, reduced to writing, books printed and schools established.

Everything moved off in a most hopeful way for eight years, when the king died. He had designed that one of his sons, who was being educated in the mission schools, should succeed him, but one of his twelve wives seized the throne, killed all who could contest her claims, and was Ranavalona I. She reigned thirty-three years. Bloody Queen Mary becomes almost a saint compared with her. She set herself to root out Christianity from her dominion. The missionaries fled from the island, the converts were put to death in every imaginable way. She thought she had accomplished her design, but many had gone to the mountain fastnesses and made themselves homes there.

When Radama II, the lamb-like son of this lioness, came to the throne, 40,000 Christians, made so by reading the Book of books, came back to their homes. And 100,000 more were found who had abandoned their idols and were ready to embrace Christianity. Radama proved a weak king, he abolished all export and import duties, and as a result such a flood of rum poured in upon them that intemperance came near wrecking all good work.

The king himself became a drunkard, and issued some disastrous edicts while intoxicated. It was a relief when his reign ended a few years later. At

his death a new constitution was framed with a few simple provisions, the first of which was, "The sovereign shall not drink spirituous liquors."

A queen followed who was a good and just ruler, though not a Christian. She died April 1, 1868, and the next day her niece, a devout Christian girl, became queen. At the late London Council 1500 Congregational churches in Madagascar were received into fellowship.

JAPAN.

Roman Catholic missionaries found their way to this island kingdom in 1549. About one hundred years later they claimed 2,000,000 converts, and seemed to be trying to seize the government. They were expelled with great slaughter, and an edict pronouncing death to any Christian who should enter the kingdom was issued. Ports were closed and all seaworthy vessels destroyed, so as to keep their own people at home. This lasted about two hundred and fifty years. We know the story of Commodore Perry and his guns. As a result of his visit, a treaty was established in 1858 opening certain ports July 4, 1859.

Representatives of the Protestant Episcopal and Presbyterian Societies of the United States were waiting outside to enter. By January 1, 1860, three missions were established. A little later, three other men, one a Japanese who had come to this country with Perry and could act as interpreter, entered the country. For the next ten years these four Ameri-

can societies occupied the field. Never was a company of men and women busier than were these during those years. It was a period of political upheaval and unparalleled mental activity in the kingdom, and these men were sought for as advisers and teachers of those high in state.

Dr. Verbeck was a fluent speaker of several languages, and eminently fitted by his temperament and versatile powers and scholarship to be the adviser of the new men who found themselves at the helm of state after the revolution of 1868. He taught large classes of young men, and from 1864 to 1878 was in government educational service at his own charges. When, in 1872, an embassy was organized to go around the world and study western civilization and ask of the treaty powers, "Justice to Japan," Dr. Verbeck found that one-half its members had been his pupils. When Japan, in 1870, sent to this country and some of the foremost European States for chosen men, teachers, scholars and statesmen to aid in laying anew the foundations of government, many were selected by the advice of the early missionaries. One who went over at the request of the government to superintend the establishment of schools, was Dr. Griffis, of Boston. He spent many years there translating and preparing books for their youth to study. He is probably the best authority on the question as to whether Japan needs the Gospel.

We can best say what has been done in a country

when we know what needed to be done. Two systems of religion were found to prevail there, Shinto, the state religion, which seemed to be made up of fetichism, the worship of charms and ancestral worship. Buddhism, a system of ethics, imported from Corea in 552 A. D. In 1887 there were 192,359 shrines and temples of Shintoism, and 71,991 of Buddhism.

The common people seemed equally given to superstition and idol worship, according to their respective sects. The exact words of Dr. Griffis are these: "In moral character the average Japanese is frank, honest, faithful, gentle, courteous, confiding, affectionate, filial, loyal." But he also adds, "Love of truth for its own sake, purity, temperance, are not characteristic virtues. Intemperance is common, and lying a national vice. Every third marriage is ruptured by a divorce." The immorality of the people as this writer found it, was beyond description; the books he was given to translate needed to be purged of half their contents. In social life it was no better; so-called respectable families often sell their daughters for the vilest purposes, the nobles setting no good examples, "The heirs to the throne being born in a herd and not in a home." The court of Louis XV would have been a model of propriety in that land. Idolatry and superstition were rampant. But Dr. Verbeck says that immorality proves a greater barrier to Christianity than idolatry.

Of results it is not so easy to speak, so many agencies have been at work there. We will mention some that came early, while there were few sources of improvement except the missionaries. In 1872 the first Protestant Christian Church was established. Following this came the abolition of the lunar calendar, the adoption of the solar calendar of Christendom and the removal of anti-Christian edicts. The return of the embassy from their tour around the world was followed by the adoption of foreign dress. A national army, navy, revenue, educational, postal, and other modern systems were adopted. In much of this the missionaries were indirect agents.

At the present time representatives of thirty societies are at work among the 40,000,000 inhabitants. Connected with the missions are many flourishing schools, the chief work of the missionaries being educational. the natives preferring to do their own preaching, for which they have a special fitness.

Of one institution there let us say a word. The Do-shisha, "One Bright Endeavor," was organized as a Christian college inKyoto in 1875 by the lamented Joseph Neesima. The first class graduated in 1879, and there has been a large class every year since. Three years ago it was raised to a university, and at present 1200 yonng men are studying there under a corps of able American and native instructors. To

measure definitely the good influences at work in Japan would be as difficult as weighing the sunshine.

In all this we have not touched some countries where the greatest work has been done. Think out for yourselves what the change would be had you spent your life in the dark interior of a conical mound of earth into which you must crawl on hands and knees, no window or chimney, no furniture or bed, lying down at night with dogs and vermin; and from this been lifted into a home, a house with modern conveniences, books and papers which you could read and understand, and endearing associations such as we have. Or suppose you had worshipped with abject fear a hideous idol or a venomous reptile, and had been lifted up until you could know and feel that "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

This has been the great work of the Christian missionaries.

Woman's Board of Missions of the Interior,
Room 603, 59 Dearborn St., Chicago.